

# The MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY

By Harold MacGrath

Through treachery in the Hargrave household Florence is delivered into the hands of an unscrupulous doctor, who is in the pay of the Black Hundred. From the faithful Susan Norton learns that the doctor has declared that Florence is stricken with smallpox and that he is preparing to spirit her away. By acting quickly the reporter, with the aid of Susan, succeeds in extricating the young woman from the danger after an encounter with members of the gang.

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CHAPTER XVII.  
SETTING TRAPS FOR NORTON.  
The Black Hundred possessed three separate council chambers, always in preparation. Hence, when the one in use was burned down, they transferred their conferences to the second council chamber appointed identically the same as the first. As inferred, the organization owned considerable wealth, and they leased the buildings in which they had their council chambers, leased them for a number of years, and furnished them secretly with trap floors, doors, and panels, and all that apparatus so necessary to men who are sometimes compelled to make a quick getaway.

When the Atlantic City attempt was turned into a fiasco by Norton's timely arrival, Braine determined once more to rid himself of this meddling reporter. He knew too much, in the first place, and in the second place Braine wanted to learn whether the reporter bore a charmed life or was just ordinarily lucky. He would attempt nothing delicate, requiring finesse. He would simply waylay Norton and make a commonplace end of him. He would disappear, this reporter, that would be all; and when they found him he might not be recognizable.

So Braine called a conference, and he and his fellow rogues went over a number of expediences, and finally agreed that the best thing to do would be to send a man to the newspaper, ostensibly as a reporter looking for a situation. With this excuse he would be able to hang around the city from for three or four days. The idea back of this was to waylay Norton on his way to some assignment which took him to the suburbs.

All this was arranged down to the smallest detail; and a man whom they were quite certain Norton had not yet seen was seldom to play the part. He had been a reporter once, more or less; so there was no doubt of his being able to handle his end of the game, hence he was given a situation.

"I want Norton, I want him badly," declared Braine, "and woe to you if you let loose, play in between you and the object of this move."

The man selected to act the reporter hung his head. Whisky had been the origin of his fall from honest living, and he was not so calloused as not to feel the sting of remorse at times. Often he longed to leave New York, to start anew elsewhere; but this man Braine was like a terror outside a rat cage filled with rodents. None ever really escaped.

"More," went on Braine, "I want Norton brought to 49. It's a little off the beat, and we can handle him as we please. When we get rid of this newspaper fellow, there'll be another to eliminate. But he's a fox, and a fox must be set to trail him."

"And who is that?" thundered Braine. "He's the big wife, but the

reporter first, Jones depends a lot on him. Take away this prop and Jones will not be so sure of himself. There's a man outside all this circle, and all these weeks of warfare have not served to bring him into the circle."

"Hargrave is dead," said Vroom stolidly.  
"As dead as I am," snarled Braine. "Two men went away in that balloon; and I'll wager my head that one man came back. I am beginning to put a few things together that I have not thought of before. Who knows? That balloon may have been carried out to sea purposely. The captain on the tramp steamer may have fled from beginning to end. I tell you, Hargrave is alive, and wherever he is he has his hand on all the wires. He has agents, too, of whom we know nothing about. Hang the million! I want to put my hands on Hargrave just to prove that I am the better man. He communicates with Jones, perhaps through the reporter; he has had me followed; it was he who changed the boxes, bored the hole in the ceiling of the other quarters, and learned Heaven knows what."

"If that's the case," said Vroom, "why hasn't he had us apprehended?" Braine laughed heartily. "Haven't you been able to see by this time what his game is? Revenge. He does not want the police to meddle only in the smaller affairs. He wants to do away with us one by one; he wants to put terror into the hearts of all of us. Keep this point in your mind when you act. He'll never summon the police unless we make a broad daylight attempt to get possession of his daughter. And even then he would make it out a plain case of kidnapping. Elimination, that's the word. All right. We'll play at that game ourselves. No, I shall be Mr. Norton. And if you fail I'll break you," Braine added to the ex-reporter.

"I'll get him," said the man sullenly.

Later, when he applied for a situation on the Blade, it happened that there were two strikes on hand, any two or three extra men were needed on the city staff. The man from the Black Hundred was given a temporary job and went by the name of Gregg. As his first copy showed experience, he was promised a permanent place as soon as there was a vacancy. Gregg smiled inwardly. It would be a fine thing to do away with Norton and step into his reportorial shoes.

For three days he worked faithfully, abstaining from his favorite tipple. He had never worked in New York, so his record was unknown. He had told the city editor that he had worked on a Chicago paper, now defunct. He paid no attention whatsoever to Norton, a sign of no little acumen. On the other hand Norton never went forth on an assignment that Gregg did not know exactly where he was going. But all these stories kept Norton in town; it would be altogether too risky to attempt to handle him anywhere but outside of town. So Gregg had to abide his time.

It came soon enough. Norton was idling at his desk when the city editor called him up to the wicket.

"Gen. Henderson has just returned to America. Get his opinion on the latest Balkan rumormongers. He's out at his suburban home. Here's the address."

"How long will you hold open for me?" asked Norton, meaning how long would the city editor wait for the

story.  
"Till one-thirty. You ought to be back by midnight. It's only 8 now."

"All right; Henderson's approachable. I may get a good story out of him."

"Maybe," thought Gregg, who had lost nothing of this conversation. It was his opportunity. He immediately left the zone of the city desk for a telephone booth. But as he passed the line of desks and busy reporters he did not note the keen scrutiny of a smooth faced, gray haired man who stood at the side of Norton's desk awaiting the reporter's return.

"Why, Jones," cried the surprised Norton. "What are you doing all this way from home?"

"Orders," said Jones, smiling faintly as he delivered a note to the reporter. "Anything serious?"

"Not that I am aware of. Miss Florence was rather particular. She wanted to be sure that the note reached your hands safely."

"And do you mean to say that you came away and left her alone in that house?"

Again Jones smiled. "I left her well guarded, you may be sure of that. She will never run away again." He waited for Norton to read the note.

It was nothing more than one of those love orders to come and call at once. And also had made Jones venture into town with it. The reporter smiled and put the note away tenderly. And then he caught Jones smiling, too.

"I'm going to marry her, Jones."

"That remains to be seen," replied the butler, not unkindly.

"Well, anyhow, thanks for bringing the note. But I've got to disappoint her tonight. I'm off in a deuce of a hurry to interview Gen. Henderson. I'll be out to tea tomorrow. You can find your way out of this old fire trap. Bye-bye!"

The moment he turned away the smiles faded from Jones' face, and with the quickness and noiselessness of a cat he reached the side of the booth in which Gregg believed himself to be secure from eavesdropping. The half dozen words Jones heard convinced him that Norton was again the object of the Black Hundred's attention. He had seen the man's face that memorable night when the balloon stopped for its passenger. Before Gregg came out of the booth Jones decided to overtake him and forewarn him, but unfortunately the reporter was nowhere in sight.

There was left for Jones nothing else but to return home or follow Gregg when he came out. As this night he knew Florence to be exceptionally well guarded, both within and without the house, he decided to wait and follow the spy.

When Braine received the message he was pleased. Norton's assignment fitted his purpose like a glove. Before midnight he would bother no one for some time—if he proved tractable. If not, he would never bother any one again. Braine gave his orders tersely. Unless Norton met with unforeseen delay, nothing could prevent his capture.

When Norton arrived at the Henderson house, a footman informed him from a veranda that Gen. Henderson was at 49 Elm street for the evening, and it would be wise to call there. Jim nodded his thanks and set off in haste for 49 Elm street. The footman did not enter the house, but hurried down the steps and slunk off among the adjacent shrubbery. His mission was over with.

The house in Elm street was Braine's suburban establishment. He went there occasionally to hibernate, as it were, to grow a new skin when closed pressed. The caretaker was a man rightly called Samson. He was a brawler of the bouncer type.

It was fast work for Braine to get out there. If the man disguised as a footman played his cards badly, Braine would have all his trouble for nothing. He disguised himself with that infernal cleverness which had long since made him a terror to the police, who were looking for ten different men instead of one. He knew that Norton would understand instantly that he was not the general; but on the other hand, he would not know that he was addressing Braine.

So the arch conspirator waited; and so Norton arrived and was ushered into the room. A single glance was enough to satisfy the reporter, always keen eyed and observant.

"I wish to see Gen. Henderson," he said politely.

"Gen. Henderson is doubtless at his own house."

"Ah!"

"Don't be alarmed—yet," said Braine smoothly.

"I am not alarmed," replied Norton. "I am only chagrined. Since Gen. Henderson is not to be found here, I must be excused."

"Ah! I begin to see."

"Indeed!" mocked Braine.

"I have tumbled or walked into a trap."

"A keen mind like yours must have recognized that fact the moment you discovered I was not the general."

"I am indebted to the Black Hundred," cooly.

"Precisely. We do not wish you ill, Mr. Norton."

"To be sure, no!" ironically. "Want with falling safes, poisoned cigarettes, and so forth, I can readily see that you have my welfare at heart. What puzzled me was the suddenness with which these affectionate signs ceased."

"You're a man of heart," said Braine with a genuine admiration. "These affectionate signs, as you call them, ceased because for the time being you ceased to be a menace. You have become what once more, and here you are."

"And what are you going to do with me now that you have got me?"

"There will be two courses. Braine reached into a drawer and drew out a thick roll of bills. "There are here something like \$5,000."

"Quite a tidy sum; enough for a

chop to get married on."

The two men eyed each other steadily. And in his heart Braine sighed. For he saw in this young man's eyes incorruptibility.

"It is yours on one condition," said Braine, reaching out his foot stealthily toward the button which would summon Samson.

"And that is," interrupted Norton, "that I join the Black Hundred."

"Or the great beyond, my lad," took up Braine, his voice crisp and cold.

Norton could not repress a shiver. Where had he heard this voice before?

Braine stiffened.

"Murder in cold blood?" he managed to say.

"Indefinite imprisonment. Choose."

"I have chosen."

"Hm!" Braine rose and went over to the sideboard for the brandy. "I'm going to offer you a drink to show you that personally there are no hard feelings. You are in the way. After you, our friend, Jones. This brandy is not poisoned, neither are the glasses. Choose either and I'll drink first. We are all desperate men, Norton; and we stop at nothing. Your life hangs by a hair. Do you know where Hargrave is?"

Norton eyed his liquor thoughtfully.

"Do you know where the money is?" Norton smiled at the brandy.

"I am sorry," said Braine. "I should have liked to win over a head like yours."

Norton nonchalantly took out his watch, and that bit of bravado perhaps saved his life. In the case of his watch he saw a brutal face behind him. Without a tremor, Norton took up his glass.

"I am sorry to disappoint you," he said; "but I shall neither join you nor go to by-ty."

Quick as a bird—shadow above grass, he flung the brandy over his shoulder into the face of the man behind. Samson yelled with pain. Almost at the same instant Norton pushed over the table, upsetting Braine with it. Next he dashed through the curtains, slammed the door, and fled to the street, very shaky about the knees, if the truth is to be told.

Gen. Henderson's views upon the latest Balkan muddle were missing from the Blade the following morning. Norton, instead of returning to the general's and fulfilling his assignment like a dutiful reporter, hurried out to Riverside to acquaint Jones with what had happened. Jones was glad to see him safe and sound.

"That new reporter started the game," he said. "I overheard a word or two while he was talking in the booth. All your telephone booths are ramshackle affairs, you use them so constantly. I tried to find you, but you were out."

"Now, tell me what happened."

"Sh!" warned Norton as he spied Florence coming down the stairs.

"I thought you couldn't come!" she cried. "But 10 o'clock!"

"I changed my mind," he replied, laughing.

He caught her arm in his and drew her toward the library. Jones smiled after them with that enigmatical smile of his, which might have signified irony or affection. After half an hour's chat, Florence wrote aware that the two men wished to talk retired.

At the door Norton told Jones what had taken place at 49 Elm street.

"Ah! we must not forget that number," mused Jones. "My advice is, keep an eye on this Gregg chap. We may get somewhere by watching him."

"Do you know where Hargrave is?" Norton laughed. "I can't get anything out of you."

"Much less any one else. I'm growing fond of you, my boy. You're a man."

"Thanks; and good-night."

When Olga Perigoff called the next day Jones divested himself of his livory, donned a plain coat and hat, and left the house stealthily. Today he was determined to learn something definite in regard to this suave, handsome Russian. When she left the house Jones rose from his hiding place and proceeded to follow her. The result of this espionage on the part of Jones will be seen presently.

Meantime Jim went down to the office and lied cheerfully about his missing the general. Whether the city editor believed him or not is of no matter. Jim went over to his desk. From the corner of his eye he could see Gregg scribbling away. He never raised his head as Jim sat down to read his mail. After while Gregg rose and left the office; and of course Jim left shortly afterward. When the newcomer came back he was being followed.

Jim smiled and continued on his way. This Norton chap was suspicious. All the better; his suspicions should be made the hook to land him with. By and by the man turned into a drug store and Jim loitered about till he reappeared. Gregg walked with brisker steps now. It was his intention to lead Norton on a wild goose chase for an hour or so, long enough to give Braine time to arrange a welcome in another house.

Norton kept perhaps half a block in the rear of his man all the while. But for this caution he would have witnessed a little pantomime that would have put him wholly upon his guard. Turning a corner, Gregg all but bumped into the countess. He was quick enough to place a finger on his lips and motion his hand toward a taxicab. Olga hadn't the least idea who was coming around the corner, but she hailed the cab and was off in it before Jim swung around the corner.

Jones, who had followed the countess for something over an hour and a half, hugged a doorway. What now? He wondered. The countess knew the map. That was evidence enough for the astute butler. But what meant the pantomime and the subsequent hurry?

He soon learned. The man Gregg went his way, and then Jim turned the corner. Jones saw a wistful glance, at the vanishing cab of the Russian, and decided to shadow the shadower. In other words, follow the reporter, to

see that nothing serious befell him. Sometimes Norton was overcautious; several times during his life with the Black Hundred he had gone outside the boundary of caution—and paid for it. He did this very thing today, and but for Jones he might have fared extremely ill.

Braine swore that this time Norton should suffer. He would wring the truth out of the reporter, the truth as far as he knew it. Braine was positive that Norton knew one or the other of two things: Hargrave's whereabouts and whether or not the mysterious box contained the million.

The lurid finally paused at a door, opened it with a key, and swung it behind him, very careful, however, not to spring the latch. Naturally Jim was mightily pleased when he found the door could be opened. When Jones, not far behind, saw him open the door, he started to call out a warning, but thought the better of it if Norton was walking into a trap far better that he, Jones, should remain outside of it. If Jim did not appear after a certain length of time, he would start an investigation on his own account.

No sooner was Jim in his hallway than he was set upon and overpowered. They had in this house what was known as "the punishment room." Here traitors paid the reckoning and were never more heard of. Into this room Jim was unceremoniously dropped when Braine found that he could get no information from the resolute reporter.

The room did not look sinister, but for all that it possessed the faculty of growing smaller and smaller, slowly or swiftly, as the man above at the lever willed. When Jim was apprised of this fact, he ran madly about in search of some mode of escape, knowing full well in his heart that he should not find one.

Presently the machinery began to work, and Norton's tongue grew dry with terror. They had him this time; there was not the least doubt of it. And they had led him there by the nose into the bargain.

Twenty minutes passed, and Jones concluded it was time for him to act. He went forward to try the door, but his time it was locked. Jones, however, was not without resource. The house next door was vacant, and he found a way into this, finally reaching the roof. From this he jumped to the other roof, found the scuttle open, and crept down the stairs, flight after flight till the whirl of a motor arrested him.

Conspirators are often overcautious. So intent were the rascals upon the business at hand that they did not notice the door open slowly. It did not take the butler more than a moment to realize that his friend and ally was near certain death. With an oath he sprang into the room, gave Braine a push which sent him down to join the victim, and pitched into the other two.

It was a battle royal while it lasted. Jones knocked down one of them, yelled to Norton, and kicked the rope he saw down into the pit. One end of this rope was attached to a ring in the wall, and up this rope Norton swarmed after he had disposed of Braine. The tide of battle then swung about in favor of the butler, and shortly the fake reporter and his companion were made to join their chief.

Jones stopped the machinery. He could not bring himself to let his enemies die so horribly. Later he knew he would regret this sentiment.

When the police came, summoned by some outsider who had heard the racket of the conflict, there was no one to be found in the pit. Nor was there any visible sign of an exit.

There was one, however, built against such an hour and known only to the chiefs of the Black Hundred.

And still the golden tinted bank notes reposed tranquilly in their hiding place.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Vandals

Either Drunk or Crazy, Man Entered New Telephone Building and Did Damage.

When employees of the Southern Bell Telephone company in Anderson found that some vandal had entered the handsome new building on Whitner street on Saturday or Sunday night and had played havoc with a considerable portion of the new wiring, just completed in the building.

The work of wiring this building in preparation for the laying of the new cables into the building and the "cutting in" of the new switchboard was a very delicate undertaking and the work of the miscreant in a few minutes caused considerable destruction.

There is absolutely no trace as to who did the work but it is safe to say that the man was either drunk or crazy, or possibly both.

Local officials of the telephone company say that the damage done will amount to very little in dollars and cents out that they will be put to considerable time and trouble in doing the work over again.

Notice of Meeting.

The annual meeting of the subscribers and friends of the Anderson County Hospital will be held in the Chamber of Commerce rooms Wednesday, Oct. 29, 4 p. m. for the purpose of electing trustees and such other business as the meeting shall see fit to transact.

R. S. LIGON, President.  
KATHERINE STALLING, Secretary.

Toned Up Whole System.

"Chamberlain's Tablets have done more for me than I ever dared hope for," writes Mrs. Esther Mae Baker, Spencerport, N. Y. "I used several bottles of these tablets a few months ago. They not only cured me of bilious attacks, sick headaches and that tired feeling, but toned up my whole system." For sale by Evans Pharmacy and all druggists.

## LONG COATS

The best you've seen for Style, Quality and Price—They come in solids and fancy mixtures, all sizes

\$5.00 to \$15.00

## New Coat Suits

Received yesterday, some good ones as low as \$15.00; others range upward to

\$45.00

## Millinery

The best any place, at any price you wish to pay.

## Shoes

Agents for Red Cross Shoes, they bend with your feet. Every pair guaranteed

\$3.50 to \$5.00

Everything in first class merchandise is here ready for you.

## Moore-Wilson Co.

### Fire

Home of Mrs. Allie Gabel in West End Was Completely Destroyed by Flames Monday.

The pretty new home of Mrs. Allie Gabel in West End, on the property being sold by lots by the Anderson Real Estate & Investment company, was completely destroyed by fire last night at 7 o'clock. When the flames were first seen by neighbors the fire had gained great headway and it was impossible to do anything toward saving the building, although practically all of the furniture was removed before it was damaged to any extent by the fire.

The house was situated on Tribble street, just outside the city limits, and although the fire department was summoned there was no water connection and they were powerless to do more than keep the burning embers off adjacent buildings.

It is commonly believed that the fire started in a closet of the house and was probably caused by rats and matches. However, a negro living near the house is said to claim that he saw a man burst open the door and run from the house just as the fire was discovered but little or no credence is placed in this tale.

The house was insured for \$600 and it is said that there was some insurance carried on the furniture.

At the time of the fire all members of the family were away from home and the place was in ashes before they were aware of their loss.

Better be safe than sorry—Willie P. Sloan, Insurance.

### Dynamite

Rumors and Reports Said That Half the Town Had Been Completely Destroyed by Bomb.

Hear any unusual sound at 10 o'clock Sunday night? Think for awhile that Col. Roosevelt was moving on the European countries, via Anderson?

A most horrible sound assailed the ears of Anderson people a few minutes after 10 o'clock Sunday night when a terrific explosion occurred. Houses in the immediate vicinity of the Riverside and Toxoway mills shook and trembled and excited people rushed to the doors on all sides. Some of the more excitable crawled under beds, others hid behind doors while a few of the more devout fell on their knees and prayed to Allah to forgive them for their sins. Pandemonium reigned, but when peace and order was finally restored and investigation got under way it was found that the situation was not nearly so bad and that not more than 10 or 12 houses had been demolished.

As a matter of fact an awful explosion did occur when some one became infuriated with the inhabitants of a negro house in the western portion of the city and hurled a stick of dynamite at the structure. Fortunately the would-be anarchist took poor aim and as a result the explosive hit just between two houses, tearing up earth and making a deafening roar but that was all.

The matter was reported to no officials and therefore nothing has been done toward apprehending the instigator of the affair.

You can get the news while its new in The Morning Daily Intelligencer.

## Fancy Gold Band China

In odd pieces; such as Chop Dishes, Celery Dishes, Roll Trays, Sandwich Plates, Lemonade Pitchers, Cake Plates, etc. These are beautiful, and just the very thing for a nice present to your wife.

We also carry full dinner sets in French China in different patterns, and different styles, ranging in price from \$20 to \$40.

See Show Window Display.

## Marchbanks & Babb

\$9.98  
Choice of the House



During this week, we will give unrestricted choice of any \$12.50 and \$15.00 Suits

For Only

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And a Watch in addition, Absolutely Free.

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